



February 6, 2008

**School Readiness Program Cycle 2-Round 3
Request for Funding, Due April 4, 2008**

Dear Executive Directors:

Enclosed is the Cycle 2-Round 3 School Readiness Program Request for Funding (RFF) dated February 2008 for the term July 2008 through June 2012. This is the final application period for Cycle 2 funding. If a county does not submit its application by April 4, 2008, Cycle 2 funds will no longer be available.

The revised Cycle 2-Round 3 RFF reflects changes in content and format made to facilitate the application completion process and to remove aspects of the narrative that are no longer pertinent or may have been redundant. The core aspects of the School Readiness Program, however, remain intact, particularly the focus on the First 5 Principles on Equity, a multi-faceted approach to school readiness (early care and education, health, etc.) and the National Goals Panel Definition of School Readiness.

Listed below are the major changes between the Cycle 2-Round 2 September 2006 RFF and the Cycle 2-Round 3 February 2008 RFF:

- I. **Content/formatting changes:** The formatting changes were made to improve the readability and flow of information in the School Readiness RFF. The major content change is the removal of the requirement for county commissions to collect and report on statewide outcomes and indicators. However, county commissions are still required to fully participate in the statewide evaluation, local evaluations and evaluation reporting requirements.
- II. **Fiscal changes:** This RFF clarifies language and makes format changes to place all fiscal requirements in the body of the RFF instead of the attachments.
 - The Small County Augmentation Project adjustment is no longer a feature of the School Readiness Program.
 - First 5 California funds must be maintained in a separate account or subaccount from non-State funds to be clearly traceable and auditable.
 - Programs must deposit advanced funds in an interest-bearing account or subaccount which shall be a separate account from the county commission's general account. County commissions may not use interest earnings for program expenditures.
 - Interest earned on funds advanced by First 5 California shall be returned to First 5 California upon reconciliation of program funds. County commissions must report the amount of interest earned to First 5 California within 90 days of the end of the period of program authority.

- Previously county commissions were required to report to First 5 California variances from program budgets of 10 percent or more. County commissions must now only notify First 5 California if the variance exceeds the lesser of \$50,000 or 20 percent of an approved budget category.
- Counties cannot use local matching funds to meet a match requirement in other (non-School Readiness) First 5 California programs.

III. Attachment changes: Five attachments were eliminated and/or merged with an existing attachment. Accordingly, the Cycle 2-Round 3 February 2008 RFF includes five attachments instead of the 10 found in the Cycle 2-Round 2 September 2006 RFF.

- Attachment 1, Request for Funding Guiding Policies was removed. The policies listed on the attachment are now embedded throughout the RFF.
- Attachment 2, Principles on Equity was updated to include recent changes and renumbered as Attachment 1.
- Attachment 3, Adapted National Education Goals Panel School Readiness definition and Attachment 4, Essential and Coordinated Elements for School Readiness were merged into one attachment, now referred to as Attachment 2.
- Attachment 5, Schedule of Current and New School Readiness Program Cycles was removed as this is the final application period.
- Attachment 6, School Readiness Menu of Outcomes and Indicators for Statewide Evaluation was removed. County commissions are now only required to report county School Readiness outcomes from local evaluations.
- Attachment 7, County School Readiness Allocation Table and Small County Augmentation Project (SCAP) County Funds Due was eliminated. The School Readiness county allocation table without SCAP is now Attachment 3.
- Attachment 8, First 5 Result Area and Services (adapted from the Annual Report) is renumbered and is now Attachment 4.
- Attachment 9, School Readiness Explanation of Terms is renumbered as Attachment 5 and includes the definitions for evidence-based and promising practices, a revised special needs definition, and fiscal terms.
- Attachment 10 was eliminated and that information is now included in Attachment 5.

IV. Form changes: Each form is now a separate document. The budget forms use the Excel format and include formulas that automatically calculate entered data. Other form changes are:

- Forms 2 and 3 were merged into a single Form 3, School Readiness Program Overview, to delete data collection that is no longer required. Local First 5 county commissions are no longer required to use the School Readiness Menu of Outcomes and Indicators.
- Form 6 was renumbered Form 8, County Coordination Funds.
- Form 7 was removed as these data are captured as part of the annual reporting requirements.

- Forms 8 and 9 were combined into the new Form 6, Partner and School List, to include both schools and other partners.
- Form 10 was renumbered to Form 7, Program Directory Information/Program Profile.
- Form 11 was removed due to the deletion of the Small County Augmentation Program (SCAP) from the School Readiness Program.
- Form 12 was renumbered Form 9, Request for Cycle 2 county coordination funds.

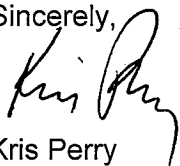
The following requirements remain the same:

- County commissions will apply for funding and operate School Readiness programs based on the state fiscal year (July 1 through June 30).
- First 5 California will continue to make county coordination funds (previously referred to as implementation funds) available and counties will account for these funds in a separate set of budget and reporting documents.
- Applications shall reflect a focus on the selection and implementation of evidence-based and promising practices. School Readiness programs must still identify and describe the evidenced-based and promising practices. Additionally, if a county commission chooses to implement a promising practice, the county must be able to demonstrate and provide the rationale for the selected practice.
- All School Readiness programs must provide services in each of the four focus areas that were formally referred to as the five "Essential and Coordinated Elements."

We strongly suggest that all county commissions applying for Cycle 2-Round 3 funds use this version of the School Readiness RFF. We do recognize, however, that this may cause a burden to some county commissions. Therefore, we will be accepting forms from the Cycle 2-Round 2 September 2006 School Readiness RFF. All applicants for Cycle 2-Round 3 must comply with the program and fiscal terms contained in the Cycle 2-Round 3 School Readiness RFF, regardless of forms submitted.

Thank you in advance for all of your hard work in developing responses to the School Readiness Program RFF. I look forward to continuing our work together on behalf of California's youngest children and their families.

Sincerely,



Kris Perry
Executive Director

cc: County School Readiness Coordinators
Enclosure: Cycle 2-Round 3 February 2008 School Readiness Program RFF